

complete. Furthermore, this piece of legislation is supported by the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities, which is made up of a coalition of national disability organizations including the American Association on Mental Retardation, National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, Paralyzed Veterans of America, The Arc of the United States, and United Cerebral Palsy. Let's work together to give Americans with disabilities the opportunity to succeed in the workplace by providing permanent Medicare coverage. Let's give Americans with disabilities a real ticket to work instead of pulling the rug out from underneath them after eight and a half years.

If this bill becomes law millions of Americans will no longer be afraid of going back to work. Enacting this small piece of legislation can have a tremendous impact on the lives of American with disabilities. We need to give Americans with disabilities a chance to become permanent, active members of the workforce. Americans with disabilities deserve the opportunity to succeed and we can give it to them by making their Medicare coverage permanent. I urge my colleagues to join us in support of this important legislation.

DEPARTMENTS OF COMMERCE,
JUSTICE, AND STATE, THE JUDICIARY,
AND RELATED AGENCIES
APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2004

SPEECH OF

HON. MICHAEL K. SIMPSON

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 22, 2003

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2799) making appropriations for the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2004, and for other purposes:

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. Chairman, I rise today to offer some perspective on the amendment offered by my colleague from California, Mr. ROHRBACHER.

As all of us know and acknowledge, Mr. ROHRBACHER's amendment seems like a no-brainer and something everyone would support. To suggest that our Nation's veterans who were held prisoner by the Japanese in World War II should be prevented from filing a lawsuit for compensation seems outside the realm of what any politician would argue. But if my colleagues will allow, I am here to do just that.

While I do acknowledge the difficulty of arguing my position, I believe it's a sound position and one any member of this body could support if only they were made aware of the history surrounding this matter and the facts behind our international obligations.

America is indeed indebted to our former POWs—whether they are World War II POWs or those, including Jessica Lynch, who were held captive by Saddam Hussein. That debt our Nation owes these men and women is not just one of gratitude, but one of compensation for their time in enemy hands.

This amendment, however, is neither the best nor a wise approach to ensuring we meet our Nation's obligations to our former POWs and I would like to explain why.

If passed by the House of Representatives and adopted in conference in its current form, this amendment would almost certainly invite a veto by the White House. I firmly believe that the President would be using sound judgment in vetoing the amendment because it would violate our treaty obligations under the treaty we signed with the Japanese at the end of World War II.

Some of us in this chamber may take those treaty obligations lightly or might suggest that we should ignore commitments made over 50 years ago. I say we must abide by those treaty obligations because that treaty is what set the foundation for the 50 years of friendship and cooperation our Nation has had with Japan. Great nations do not violate their treaty obligations nor do they go back on their commitments to their friends. Great nations abide by their commitments and stand with their friends in easy situations and in difficult situations.

I believe there is another compelling reason why this amendment should be rejected and why we should choose another course. The amendment offered by my colleague from California only addresses those POWs who were taken captive during World War II. What about the POWs from the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Iranian Hostage Crisis, the Persian Gulf War, or our most recent war with Iraq? These POWs have suffered extraordinary hardships and, due to the inequity in this amendment, would be left without any long-term compensation for their sacrifices.

I think it's important to point out that our Nation is currently home to an estimated 42,781 surviving ex-POWS: more than 39,700 from World War II, 2,400 from the Korean War, 601 from the Vietnam War, one from Somalia and three from Kosovo—and these numbers don't include the POWs from our actions against Iraq.

That is why I have offered an alternative—one that would accomplish everything this amendment does not. My legislation, H.R. 850, would create a new compensation system for former POWs delivered through the Department of Veterans Affairs. Under the new system, POWs detained 30 to 120 days would receive \$150 per month, those detained 121 to 540 days would receive \$300 per month, and those detained for 540 or more days would receive \$450 per month. Payment would be made without regard to any other compensation under the laws of the United States. In addition, the bill contains a provision to provide outpatient dental care for all POWs. Current law requires a period of internment of not less than 90 days in order to qualify. Further, I have already agreed to eliminate the 30 day requirement to be eligible for benefits under the bill to ensure POWs who were held for a shorter period of time, including those who have returned from Iraq, would in fact be eligible for monthly compensation.

Mr. Chairman, my legislation offers this body an alternative to breaking our treaty obligations and failing to meet our commitments to 50-year-old friends and allies. World War II ended nearly 60 years ago and throughout the last half of the twentieth century, Japan proved time and again that it is one of our most trusted allies and a nation upon whom we could count for lasting friendship. If anything, the last year has shown this Nation the value of trusted friends and our need for close allies around the globe.

We have the chance today to do something noble. We can both be a good friend to Japan and meet our commitments to the men and women who have worn our Nation's uniform and been held captive during foreign wars. We can do this by rejecting the path chosen by my colleague from California and by, instead, choosing an approach such as that offered in H.R. 850.

A TRIBUTE TO DR. BRIAN BOWKER

HON. NICK SMITH

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 23, 2003

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Brian Bowker on the completion of his doctorate in animal sciences from Purdue University and his dedication to science and agriculture.

As a Federation of Animal Science Societies (FASS) Congressional Science Fellow, Dr. Bowker serves as Legislative Assistant in my office. I've had the benefit of Brian's expert advice on agricultural issues. I have seen the extent of his education but more importantly the extent of his character. Brian has reached an educational level that few people obtain, yet he desires to learn more and to use that knowledge to benefit others. He understands the concept, which few of us really embrace, that as Albert Einstein said, "Intellectual growth should commence at birth and cease only at death."

The recipient of numerous awards and honors, Brian has received the Featherston Outstanding PhD Award and the Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award. In addition, the Animal Science Department of Purdue University named Brian the outstanding freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior. He has received the Oakley M. Ray Distinguished Leadership Award, the Millard Plumlee Scholarship, and the Richard A. Pickett Scholarship, just to name a few. Also, Brian is a member of the American Meat Science Association and the American Society of Animal Sciences.

Therefore, on behalf of the Congress of the United States, I commend Dr. Brian Bowker for receiving his PhD, and thank him for his service to our Nation.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RODNEY P. FRELINGHUYSEN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 23, 2003

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Chairman, on rollcall No. 406, the Hostettler amendment to H.R. 2799, the Commerce-Justice-State appropriation bill for fiscal 2004, on Tuesday July 22, during a series of several votes, I inadvertently voted "no" when I intended to vote "yes."

I strongly disagree with the decision handed down by the 9th Circuit on the Pledge of Allegiance and have voted to reflect that disapproval twice previously: on June 27, 2002 (H. Res. 459) and on March 6, 2003 (H. Res. 132).